

# Grants can help Delaware volunteer fire companies fight wildfires



The Delaware Forest Service's Volunteer Assistance Grant program is now open to help volunteer fire companies underwrite the cost of acquiring specialized equipment to fight wildfires. The application deadline is May 1. For information, contact Kyle Hoyd at 302-698-4548 or [kyle.hoyd@delaware.gov](mailto:kyle.hoyd@delaware.gov).

DOVER – More than \$20,000 of grant funding is now available to help Delaware's volunteer fire companies fight wildfires in their communities. The Delaware Forest Service's [Volunteer Fire Assistance Grants](#) are designed to help fire companies purchase the specialized equipment needed to meet the unpredictable threat of wildfires in fields, forests, open spaces, and marshes. Applicants can request up to \$4,500 per year. Funds can be used to acquire items such as  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch forestry hose, safety gear, brush unit pumps/skids, and hand tools. All grants require a 50-50 cost-share match in

cash or in-kind services and priority will be given to applicants that have not received funding in the past three years. Last year, seven volunteer fire companies received \$23,020 through the VFA grant program to purchase wildfire suppression equipment.

The 2018 Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant Forms are [available online](#) in either [MS Word](#) or [PDF](#) format. The application deadline is May 1. No email applications will be accepted. Forms should be mailed to: Kyle Hoyd, Delaware Forest Service, 2320 S. DuPont Highway, Dover, Delaware 19901

For more information, contact: Kyle Hoyd, Delaware Forest Service Wildland Fire Program, (302) 698-4548, or [Kyle.Hoyd@delaware.gov](mailto:Kyle.Hoyd@delaware.gov)

Delaware's volunteer fire companies are vital to the Delaware Forest Service because they provide much of the manpower and resources to fight wildfires in the state. In FY17, the Delaware Forest Service assisted 49 of Delaware's 60 volunteer fire companies (82%) with wildfire suppression, loaning of equipment, or training. During the same period, the DFS also responded to 13 wildfires on nearly 26 wooded acres and was on standby on over 100 brush and field fires. Upon request, the DFS can provide trained personnel, bulldozers equipped with fire plows to establish firebreaks, and wildland fire suppression tools such as fire rakes, hose, and collapsible backpack water tanks.



This backpack and hose are just some of the tools that are used to fight wildfires. The Delaware Forest Service's VFA grants can help volunteer fire companies buy equipment to battle wildfires in their communities.

The Delaware Forest Service also maintains two fire equipment supply caches, one at Blackbird State Forest and one at Redden State Forest. In addition to these supply caches the Delaware Forest Service has two type 6 engines, three fire plows, and four UTVs with slip-in tanks that are available to help with wildfires.





The Delaware Forest Service's Type 6 engine at Blackbird State Forest is available to help volunteer fire companies respond to wildfires. Last year, the DFS assisted 49 of Delaware's 60 volunteer fire companies (82%) with wildfire suppression, loaning of equipment, or training.

The VFA grant program has proven to be a cost-effective way to leverage limited federal funding. While grant applicants must provide at least 50 percent cost-share match in cash or in-kind services, many recipients provide much more – producing more than one and a half times the grant amounts. Funded by the U.S. Forest Service, the Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) program has funded more than 125 grants in excess of \$320,000 over the past 11 years.

"Volunteer fire companies are very important to the Delaware Forest Service as well as communities throughout the First State. They are often the first on the scene to respond to wildfires in our fields and woods and marshes," said Kyle Hoyd, Assistant State Forester and director of the agency's

Wildland Fire Program. "This grant program can help volunteer firefighters meet the challenge of wildfires by increasing access to specialized wildfire equipment and resources."